

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3245
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINGSTON 7001

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JM
SUBJECT: CONFRONTATION IN JAMAICAN POLITICS CONTINUES TO BUBBLE

REF: KINGSTON 6906

SUMMARY: THE WEEK'S ACTIVITIES IN JAMAICAN POLITICS CONTINUED IN A FRENETIC MODE AS MANLY CAME BACK SWINGING FROM HIS VACATION. WE HAVE TO KEEP A TOTE BOARD ON THE CHARGES, COUNTERCHARGES, NEW ALLEGATIONS, CORRECTIONS OF FORMER STATEMENTS, AND OTHER POLITICAL MOVES. ALL THIS SOUND AND FURY INDICATES A DEFENSIVE GOVERNMENT, BOMBARDED BY VERY SERIOUS CHARGES AND REELING A BIT, BUT DETERMINED TO HANG ON, AND ON ANOTHER LEVEL MUCH MANEUVERING WITHIN THE GOVERNING PEOPLES NATIONAL PARTY (PNP). END SUMMARY.

1. PM MANLEY ISSUED HIS LONG STATEMENT ON AUGUST 19 (SEE REFTEL) ANSWERING LT. COL. LLOYD'S ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE USE OF TORTURE. MANLEY ALSO PROMISED A STATEMENT DENYING THE "I SPIED FOR THE PRIME MINISTER" CHARGES. ON THAT SAME DAY OPPOSITION LEADER SEAGA SENT A DETAILED BRIEF TO THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER TO LOOK INTO CORRUPTION,, CHIEF JUSTICE SMITH, ALLEGING:
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"(1) THE OPERATION OF THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE UNIT HAVE REVEALED A PERVERSION OF THE CHAIN OF MILITARY COMMAND IN KEY AND CRITICAL AREAS. (2) THE MIU AND THE SPECIAL BRANCH UNIT OF THE POLICE FORCE WERE BEING USED AS POLITICAL WEAPONS BY THE GOVERNMENT, CORRUPTLY SUPPORTED FROM PUBLIC FUNDS. (3) THE MIU PRACTICES TORTURE, A FREIGHTENING VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. (4) THE CLEAR FAILURE TO

INVESTIGATE OR DISCIPLINE THE MIU FOR ILLEGAL OPERATIONS SUGGESTS THAT IT HAD THE SUPPORT OF THE POLITICAL DIRECTORATE. (5) THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE UNIT HAS SUBVERTED THE CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF THE JAMAICA DEFENSE FORCE."

2. ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, THE ALLEGED "SPY" ALBERT ROBINSON, WAS FORCIBLY EVICTED FROM HIS GOVERNMENT HOUSE BY A LARGE GROUP OF ARMED POLICE. PUBLIC UTILITIES MINISTER COOKE GAVE OUT A DETAILED STATEMENT EXPLAINING THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN TRYING TO GET ROBINSON OUT FOR A LONG TIME. COOKE DID NOT EXPLAIN, HOWEVER, WHY ROBINSON GOT THE HOUSE IN THE FIRST PLACE.

3. ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, MANLEY ISSUED A STATEMENT AMENDING HIS STATEMENT OF AUGUST 29. HE ADMITTED THAT HE HAD, IN FACT, RECEIVED A LETTER FROM LT. COL. LLOYD ON MARCH 20, 1978, DETAILING THE CHARGES OF TORTURE. MANLEY ASERTS THAT THE CHARGES WERE ONLY INCIDENTAL IN THE LETTER AND THE MAIN INTENT OF THE LETTER WAS LLOYD'S QUESTIONING OF THE PROCEDURE USED IN DISMISSING HIM FROM THE ARMY.

4. ALSO, ON THURSDAY ARMY COMMANDER GENERAL GREEN ISSUED A LONG AND WELL-WRITTEN STATEMENT GIVING HIS BRIEF AGAINST LT. COL. LLOYD. HE CHARGES LLOYD WITH OUTRIGHT LYING. THURSDAY'S OUTPUT CONTINUED WITH: (A) A STRONG STATEMENT BY MANLEY AGAINST THE OPPOSITION JLP, WHICH ENDED WITH THE OMINOUS NOTE "...THOSE WHO ACT OUTSIDE THE CONSTITUTION MAY FIND THAT THEY PUT THEMSELVES OUTSIDE ITS PROTEC-
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TION." (B) A STATEMENT FROM THE PNP EXECUTIVE ALSO BLASTING SEAGA AND THE JLP OVER ITS "ANTI-DEMOCRATIC THREATS."

5. ON FRIDAY, SEPT. 1 IT WAS THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT SIDE'S TURN, AND SEAGA SURPRISINGLY ANNOUNCED THAT THE JLP WOULD RETURN TO THE SENATE. HE HAS RE-APPOINTED EIGHT OF THE NINE FORMER SENATORS, REPLACING BARRY WAHRMAN WITH MR. ERROL ANDERSON, A TRADE UNIONIST. SEAGA SAID THAT HIS ORIGINAL REASON FOR THE DEPARTURE -- FAILURE TO INVESTIGATE THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE UNIT, HAS NOW BEEN COVERED BY THE EXPECTATION THAT IT WILL BE INVESTIGATED BY THE SMITH COMMISSION. ASIDE FROM SEAGA'S ANNOUNCEMENT, FRIDAY'S ONLY OTHER EVENT WAS A PRESS CONFERENCE BY "SPY" ALBERT ROBINSON IN WHICH HE REPEATED HIS FORMER ALLEGATIONS AND SAID HE WAS GOING "UNDERGROUND" IN FEAR OF HIS LIFE.

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6. SUNDAY'S PAPERS ADDED TO THE MIASMA. LT. COL. LLOYD CAME OUT WITH ANOTHER LONG STATEMENT, REFUTING MANLEY'S AND GREEN'S REFUTATIONS, CALLING THEM BOTH LIARS. ALSO, SUNDAY BROUGHT CONFIRMATION THAT THE SOLE COMMISSIONER WOULD LOOK INTO ROBINSON'S ALLEGATIONS, AND ALSO THERE WAS A GOOD INDICATION THAT SMITH WOULD LOOK INTO THE "GREEN BAY" AFFAIR, BUT AFTER THE UPCOMING CRIMINAL TRIAL.

7. MONDAY'S NEWS WAS TAME, ONLY FEATURING AN ATTACK ON THE DAILY GLEANER BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PATTERSON. TUESDAY MANLY WAS BACK AT IT, WITH A SHORT STATEMENT EXPLAINING THAT HE WOULD NOT MAKE HIS PROMISED STATEMENT ON THE ROBINSON ALLEGATIONS, SINCE IT WOULD BE IMPROPER IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE CHIEF JUSTICE WAS TAKING UP THE MATTER. MANLEY ALSO SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT REPLY TO LT. COL. LLOYD'S LATEST, AS NO PURPOSE WOULD BE SERVED TO PROLONG THE DEBATE.

7. COMMENT: INFIGHTING BY PRESS STATEMENT IS, MECHANICALLY, THE BEST OPERATIVE MODE FOR THE TWO SIDES WHILE PARLIAMENT IS OUT OF SESSION, BUT THIS EXCHANGE IS FIERCE EVEN BY USUAL JAMAICAN STANDARDS. MANLEY IS CLEARLY ON THE DEFENSIVE, AS THE TWO MAJOR ATTACKS (LLOYD AND ROBINSON) HIT HIM PERSONALLY. HE IS NOT GIVING ANY
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GROUND, HOWEVER, AND THE OUTCOME OF ALL THIS IS HARD TO PREDICT. THE JLP IS HOPING FOR A KIND OF SPONTANEOUS MASS CONDEMNATION OF MANLEY AND HIS GOVERNMENT, WHICH WOULD SOMEHOW FORCE A RESIGNATION-- THERE IS MUCH TALK OF "WATERGATE." HOWEVER, EVEN IF SOME OF THE CHARGES ARE MORE OR LESS PROVEN IN THE COURTS OR THE SOLE COMMISSION, AND EVEN IF MANLEY IS SOMEHOW CONNECTED PERSONALLY, WE WOULD NOT EXPECT HIM TO GIVE UP MEEKLY. HE PROBABLY GENUINELY VIEWS THESE

ATTACKS AS CRASS POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM BY THE JP, A KIND OF "DESPERATE" SERIES OF MOVES BY THE OPPOSITION, AND NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT IN THE LONG TERM IF HE CAN PUT A LID ON THEM OR STRING THEM OUT IN LEGAL OBFUSCATION.

THE BIGGER WORRY IS HOW THE CHARGES GO DOWN IN HIS OWN PARTY. THERE ARE MANY VESTIGES OF OLD-TIME RECTITUDE IN THE PNP, AND THE SUPPORT OR AT LEAST ACQUIESCENCE OF THESE SOLID TYPES WITH SOLID AND TRADITIONAL ELECTORAL AND UNION BASES ARE A NECESSITY IF MANLEY IS TO MAINTAIN THE HEGEMONY OF HIS OWN PARTY. DISSATISFACTION IS SURFACING. THE GOVERNOR GENERAL, FLORIZEL GLASSPOLE, HAS MADE NO SECRET, BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, OF HIS DISGUST OVER SOME OF THE THINGS GOING ON. ANOTHER IMPORTANT PNP STALWART, CECIL CHARLTON, THE MAJOR OF MANDEVILLE, STRONGLY CONDEMNED VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE PNP PERFORMANCE LAST WEEK, THOUGH HE AVOIDED ATTACKING MANLEY BY NAME. NEITHER OF THESE RESPECTED FIGURES HAS A PARTICULAR POLITICAL ADVANTAGE TO BE GAINED, BUT THEY ARE INDICATIVE OF A MOOD WITHIN THE RIGHT AND CENTER OF THE PARTY. WE DO NOT THINK THIS MOOD IS SUFFICIENTLY FOCUSED TO TOPPLE MANLEY AT NEXT WEEK'S PARTY CONFERENCE. HE IS A SITTING PM AND HE IS THE ONLY CHARISMATIC LEADER AVAILABLE. BUT DISAFFECTION IN THE RANKS, AT THIS TIME, EXACERBATED BY VERY SERIOUS CHARGES, MUST BE WORRYING.

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Message Attributes

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